

**The Orthodox Parish
of the Holy and Life-Giving Cross,
Lancaster, UK.**

The Stavronian

Monthly magazine and newsletter published by the Holy Cross Synodia



*Έπιθρονος Χριστός, Ζωοδότης.
(Φ. Κόντογλου, 1962).*

*The Parish of the Holy and Life-Giving Cross,
belongs to the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of the British Isles and Ireland.
The Patriarchate of Antioch is third senior of the Orthodox Churches.
Our Metropolitan is His Eminence Bishop Silouan.
Our Patriarch is His Beatitude John X.*

*The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch
(Acts 11:26)*

Often, goes the Christ in the stranger's guise

TEARS

John 11:35 "Jesus wept."

Tears are the clearest proof of love.
Tears of joy come from above.
Tears of sorrow too deep to tell,
Drawn from that most bitter well.

Tears of sadness follow sighs.
Tears of crocodiles are lies.
Tears of gladness born of mirth,
Repentant tears of spiritual worth.

Tears to wash away our pain,
Tears when we see someone again,
Tears that cleanse our troubled soul,
These are sent to make us whole.

Tears show that we have concern,
Tears correct to make us learn.
Tears of pride when one achieves,
Parting tears when someone leaves.

Tears express anger for another;
Tears at a funeral of a brother.
Tears reveal the longing heart
The Spirit's gifts to us impart.

Tears help our nature to refine,
Tears are human and divine.
Tears are shown when we accept
The truth that even "Jesus wept."

*"Above all pray for the gift of tears."
St. Nil Sorsky*

To the glory of God

THE INVITATION

Luke 14:15-18; The Parable of the Great Supper:
Now when one of those who sat at the table with Him heard these things, he said to Him, "Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!" Then He said to him, "A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were

invited, 'Come, for all things are now ready.' But they all with one accord began to make excuses.

I rang your door bell but there was no answer.
I rang the Church bell but you decided to stay in bed.

I e-mailed you but there was no response.
I texted you but you were busy.
I put it on Facebook (!) but it just provoked an argument.
I put posters up but you did not like the design.
I advertised in the local press but you only looked at the headlines.
I called you but it went to recorded message.

When you were a baby your God parents brought you to Church to be baptised.
When you were in love your partner brings you to Church to be married
When you die your friends and family will bring you to Church for your funeral.
When are **you** going to accept the invitation for yourself?
So what is missing from CH__CH?

"Christianity, if false, is of no importance and, if true, is of infinite importance. The one thing it cannot be is moderately important."
--- C.S. Lewis "God In The Dock" (1970)

Fr Jonathan

ACCOUNTANCY AND REDEMPTION

In our everyday lives we live under the empire of the contract. We provide a service in exchange for a fee. We purchase things for the just sum of their worth.

Even in our personal life we offer love to those who love us. We invite back for dinner friends who have invited us. We qualify as ungrateful people who do not reciprocate our kindness or generosity. We often expect something back when we give. And if we give without expectation of return, we mentally bank it for our advantage at the Final Judgement.

We complain of unfairness when we give something and receive no reward. In the parable of the prodigal son, the brother finds the father to

be unfair under this rule of the contract. *“Lo these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat that I might make merry with my friends. But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.”* (Luke 15:28) We effectively draw up accounting sheets in our mind: given -received. We expect to have the same relationship with our Father in heaven and complain if we do things right and have no reward. We often make bargains with God. We offer sacrifices in atonement or in exchange for blessings. We make a donation to church and tick the box of given, waiting for the prize. Reversely, people often attribute their misfortunes to a divine punishment for their sins. If trials, suffering and tribulations are there to help us grow spiritually, they are nonetheless not a tit for tat system of reprisals.

In Isaiah 1:11, God says *“What is the multitude of your sacrifices to me? [...] Although you should bring fine wheat flour, it is vain. Incense is an abomination to me.”* The Pharisee prays in the temple enumerating his good deeds and the rich young man mentally ticks off all the boxes of Judaic law. But our God is not an accountant. He gives freely. And furthermore what can we offer Him as a sacrifice? All we have: life, possessions is from Him, freely bestowed on us. All we do in our sacrifices is offer them back. Only one thing is required: Love. Our Lord only asks of us to Love Him not as a bargain but as a free flow. He asks us to throw away our books of accounts and love our neighbour and our enemy. Freely and without counting.

It is only when we abandon our calculations and stop believing that we can somehow purchase redemption through our offerings and sacrifices that we can start depending on God’s mercy. *“The thief who received the Kingdom of heaven though not as the reward of virtue, is a true witness to the fact that salvation is ours through the grace and mercy of God. All of our holy fathers knew this and all with one accord teach that perfection in holiness can be achieved only through humility.”* (St John Cassian)

If we continue to rely on ourselves on our journey to holiness we are likely to fall into despondency, since how can we look at our soul truthfully in humility and not be overwhelmed with our sinfulness? How can we look at the state

of the world around us and not despair? The only hope is in our Lord and His love and mercy. *“Understand two thoughts and fear them. One says You are a saint, the other -- You won’t be saved. Both of these thoughts are from the enemy and there is no truth in them.”* (St Silouan the Athonite)

The Cross and Resurrection are the price of our redemption, the reality of God’s mercy. We do not hope in God’s mercy, we know God’s mercy. It has been revealed to us all through Jesus Christ, through His passion and in His Resurrection. We must simply abandon our petty calculations, abandon ourselves in humility to a Love so great that we can never fully comprehend it. As we approach Pascha, let us receive gratefully, lovingly and humbly the ultimate gift of Life from our Father in Heaven.

The Most High planted in the middle of Paradise the thrice blessed wood, the gift of life for us, in order that, in approaching it Adam might find eternal and immortal life, but he did not strive earnestly to know this life and he failed to attain it and revealed death. However the robber seeing how the plant in Eden had been beautifully transplanted in Golgotha, recognised the Life in it and said to himself “This is what my father lost formerly in Paradise.” (St Romanos the Melodist)

Martha and Mary



Venerable Romanus the Melodist, “Sweet-Singer”
(image [source](#))

ATTENDING THE SERVICES AT CHURCH

Dear brothers and sisters,

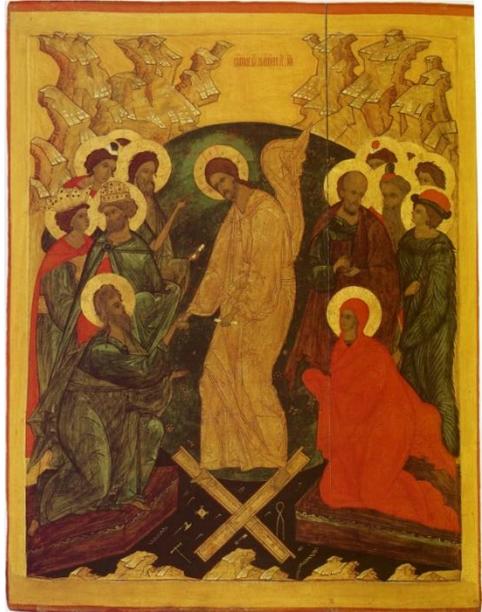
COVID pandemic is in retreat in the UK. Glory to God for His mercy! From the 27th of January 2022, the Government in England scraps almost all mandatory COVID measures, except for self-isolation rules for the infected. In line with these two facts, we relax the COVID rules in our church too. **Most importantly, there is no more cap on the attendance numbers, and you DO NOT have to register for attendance anymore.** Please come to the church whenever there is a service. There is no need to notify us of your attendance in advance or provide your contact details for the NHS Test & Trace.

COVID may be retreating, but there are still many cases across the UK and in the North West of England in particular. **Therefore, the following anti-COVID measures remain in our church:**

1. We **strongly encourage you to take a lateral flow test (LFT)** before attending the church. It is an easy way to ensure you are not ill and to protect the other faithful, some of whom are medically vulnerable. If you test “positive”, do not come to the church and follow the [government guidance](#) instead.
2. We **strongly encourage you to keep on wearing masks while in the church**, unless you are medically exempt. The wearing of masks in confined places is highly recommended by medical experts and in line with government guidance.
3. Windows **are to remain open at all times** during services in the Church to improve airflow in line with the expert and government guidance.

THANKSGIVING OF FAITH AND PRAYER

During the pandemic, we continue the standard prayer practice at home, including the reading of the Lord's prayer at 12:00 every day. In addition, many parishioners have already signed for the



The Resurrection of Christ (image [source](#))

Vigil Prayer [online](#), so that the non-stopping prayer is maintained by the faithful all over the world continuously for 24 hours, until the pandemic surrenders.

NAMES OF DEPARTED LOVED ONES TO BE REMEMBERED THIS MONTH

Apr. 8: *Evangelos*

Apr. 14: *Jeanne*

Apr. 16: *Aristides*

MEMORY ETERNAL!

Please send us the names of your departed loved ones and date of their departure in order for them to be remembered.



MAJOR CELEBRATIONS THIS MONTH

3rd Apr: Sunday of St. John Climacus
 7th Apr: The Great Cannon of St Andrew of Crete
 9th Apr: The Akathist Hymn
 10th Apr: Sunday of St. Mary of Egypt
 16th Apr: Lazarus Saturday
 17th Apr: Palm Sunday

23rd Apr: St. George the Great Martyr and Triumphant
 24th Apr: **Great and Holy Pascha**
 25th Apr: Mark the Apostle & Evangelist
 29th Apr: Theotokos of the Life-Giving Spirit
 30th Apr: James the Apostle & brother of St. John the Theologian

For the lives of Saints please visit the Calendar of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America: www.calendar.goarch.org

Services at St Martin's in April

Fri. 1st	18:00	4 th Akathist and Little Compline
Sat. 2nd	15:45	Memorial Saturday of Souls
Sun. 3rd	09:45	Liturgy of St Basil (St John Climacus)
Fri. 8th	18:00	Little Compline and Full Akathist
Sat. 9th	16:00	Great Vespers
Sun. 10th	09:45	Liturgy of St Basil (St Mary of Egypt)
Sat. 16th	09:45	Liturgy of St John Chrysostom (Lazarus Saturday)
Sun. 17th	09:45	Liturgy of St John Chrysostom (Palm Sunday)
Great and Holy Week		
Mon. 18th	18:00	Orthros and Bridegroom Service
Tue. 19th	18:00	Orthros and Bridegroom Service
Wed. 20th	18:00	Efchalion Service. The Blessing of Holy Oil
Thurs. 21st	18:00	The Twelve Gospels
Fri. 22nd	10:00	Royal Hours
	11:00	Preparation of the Holy Epitaphion
	12:30	Great Vespers
	18:00	Lamentations and Procession
Sat. 23rd	10:00	Liturgy of St Basil (Victory of Hades)
	21:00	Resurrection Matins
	22:00	Giving of the Light followed by the Liturgy of the Resurrection
Sun. 24th	15:00	Vespers of Love followed by Parish Feast
Sat. 30th	16:00	Bright Saturday. Great Vespers

* Services online. Please, join a Skype group <https://join.skype.com/KZt20cnwQw5f> to join a current service. The live services are also available on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/groups/126074338184/>. All services are subject to change or non-transmission because of Internet connection or availability.



The Paschal Greeting in various languages*

English	Christ is Risen! He is Risen indeed!
Arabic	المسيح قام ! حقا قام (El-Mesiyah qhama! Haqqan qaam!)
German	Christus ist auferstanden! Er ist wahrhaft auferstanden!
Greek	Χριστός ἀνέστη! Ἀληθῶς ἀνέστη! (Christos anesti! Alithos anesti!)
Romanian	Hristos a înviat! Adevărat a înviat!
Bulgarian	Христос възкресе! Наистина възкресе! (Khristos vzkrese! Naistina vzkrese!)
Russian	Христос воскрес! Воистину воскрес! (Khristos voskrese! Voistinu voskrese!)
Polish	Chrystus zmartwychwsta! Prawdziwie zmartwychwsta! (Khristus zmertvykh-vstau! Pradzıvie zmertvikh-vstau!)
Latvian	Kristus (ir) augšamcēlies! Patiesi viņš ir augšamcēlies! (Kristus (ir) aughsham-elias! Patiesi vin ir aughsham-elias!)
Chinese (Mandarin)	基督復活了！他確實復活了！ (Titu fuhuola! Ha-tieshi fuhuola!)

*Underlined letters indicate the emphasis in pronunciation

“God cares for everyone. Despair is in effect a lack of faith”
-- St. George Karslides –



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The following blogs of Old Stavronians are available in Romanian, [Constiinta Ortodoxa](#), in English, [Orthodox city hermit](#), and in Greek, [Orthodoxy rainbow](#).

